Introduction

Folk culture is a lifestyle based on values and a respect for nature. Three of the main factors in folk culture are personal honor, loyalty for their family or clan, and of duties to the community. These beliefs are passed down from generation to generation. It is a society where their main goal is for every member to truly be free and to live in harmony. It is really important to treasure the Earth and their community. They seek to understand the Earth and all of its mysteries as well as other cultures.

Teachers can help students to understand folk culture by giving them vicarious experiences. The teacher can help students understand how life was different in the past and how other cultures lived. Students need to develop a respect and understanding for other cultures, which can occur when students participate in other customs.

Native Americans are known for their relationship with the earth. One way that they interacted with the earth was by performing rain dances. These dances usually occurred in late summer when rain was needed for their crops or when there was a drought. Since they lived off of the land it was crucial that they had rain for their crops in order to survive. Many tribes throughout the United States still do rain dances today to honor their ancestors and keep the tradition alive.

**Procedural Recommendations**

Build anticipation by asking the class “when you hear the words ‘rain dance’ what do you envision?” Then show the class a video of a Native American rain dance. Show a clip of two different rain dance videos to show how different tribes can have their own versions of the dance. When choosing videos make sure they are appropriate ahead of time.

* Ask the class if the videos matched up with what they had envisioned.
* Show a PowerPoint explaining the both the definition of folk culture and the use of a rain dance.
* The teachers will give the class directions on how to do a rain dance.
* Have the class spread out through the classroom.
* Play music to go along with the rain dance.
* Spin around in a circle clockwise at a slow and steady pace.
* Begin chanting “rain”
* Occasionally raise your hands up towards the sky to encourage the rain to fall.
* When the music stops fall to your knees in silence and wait for the dizziness to pass.

**Applications and Ideas**

The teacher will ask the class “when you hear the words ‘rain dance’ what do you envision?” Then the teacher will show two clips of Native American rain dance videos to grab their attention. After that the class will discuss if the two rain dances were what the class had imagined. Next, the teacher will show the class a brief PowerPoint that explains what folk culture is and why rain dances were used. Finally, the students will get to do their very own rain dances as instructed by the teacher. First, the class will need to spread out throughout the classroom so that they’re not bumping into anything or each other. Then the class will begin spinning in clockwise at a slow pace; they don’t want to get too dizzy too quickly. After they have started turning in circles they will begin chanting the word “rain.” Throughout the dance they will occasionally raise their hands to the sky to encourage the rain to fall. After the music has stopped they will fall to their knees in silence and remain there until all dizziness has passed.

**Assessment**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **4 points** | **3 points** | **2 points** | **1 point** |
| Student fully participates | Student partially participates | Student is standing | Student refuses to participate |
| Student follows all directions | Student follows most directions | Student follow some directions | Student follows no directions |
| Student stops when the music ends | Student stops soon after the music ends | Student stops after being told to stop | Student keeps spinning |

References and Resources

“What Is Folk Culture:” <http://folkculture.tripod.com/what.html>

“How To Perform a Native American Rain Dance:” <http://www.ehow.com/how_5722524_perform-native-american-rain-dance.html>

“Native American Rain Dance:” [www.support-native-american-art.com/native-american-rain-dance.html](http://www.support-native-american-art.com/native-american-rain-dance.html)

“Apache “Mountain Spirit Dance” –Native Indian music:” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3EQcKzw8Mc>

“Rain dance - Thunderbird American Indian Festival - NYC, 2/4/12:” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2e1515l7Tc>

“Cherokee Rain Dance:” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsD59v-c1OU>